



INACTIVATED INFLUENZA VACCINE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW 2004-2005

(Additional information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

1. Why get vaccinated?

Influenza ("flu") is a serious disease. It is caused by a virus that spreads from infected persons to the nose or throat of others. Influenza can cause:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| ✓ fever | ✓ cough |
| ✓ sore throat | ✓ headache |
| ✓ chills | ✓ muscle aches |

Anyone can get influenza. Most people are ill with influenza for only a few days, but some get much sicker and may need to be hospitalized. Influenza causes an average of 36,000 deaths each year in the U.S., mostly among the elderly. Influenza vaccine can prevent influenza.

Most people need only one flu shot each year to prevent influenza. Children under 9 years old getting flu vaccine for the first time should get 2 doses. With the inactivated vaccine, these doses are given one month apart. Children in this age group who got one dose the previous year, even if it was the first time they got the vaccine, need only one dose this year.

2. Some people should talk with a doctor before getting influenza vaccine.

Talk with a doctor before getting a flu shot if you:

- ever had a serious allergic reaction to eggs or to a previous dose of influenza vaccine, or
- have a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS).

If you have a fever or are severely ill at the time the shot is scheduled, you should probably wait until you recover before getting influenza vaccine. Talk to your doctor or nurse about whether to reschedule the vaccination.

3. What are the risks from inactivated influenza vaccine?

A vaccine, like any medicine, could possibly cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. The risk of a vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small.

Serious problems from inactivated flu vaccine are very rare. The viruses in inactivated influenza vaccine have been killed, so you cannot get influenza from the vaccine.

Mild problems include soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given, fever and/or aches. If these problems occur, they usually begin soon after the shot and last 1-2 days.

Severe problems:

- Life-threatening allergic reactions from vaccines are very rare. If they do occur, it is within a few minutes to a few hours after the shot.
- In 1976, swine flu vaccine was associated with a severe paralytic illness called Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS). Influenza vaccines since then have not been clearly linked to GBS. However, if there is a risk of GBS from current influenza vaccines, it is estimated at 1 or 2 cases per million persons vaccinated . . . much less than the risk of severe influenza, which can be prevented by vaccination.

4. What if there is a moderate or severe reaction?

What should I look for?

- Any unusual condition, such as a high fever or behavior changes. Signs of a serious allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness.

What should I do?

- Call a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away.
- Tell your doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given.
- Ask your doctor, nurse, or health department to report the reaction by filing a Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) form.

Or you can file this report through the VAERS web site at www.vaers.org, or by calling 1-800-822-7967.

VAERS does not provide medical advice.

5. How can I learn more?

- Ask your doctor or nurse. They can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - Call 1-800-232-2522 (English)
 - Call 1-800-232-0233 (Español)
 - Visit CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/flu

Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Immunization Program

Inactivated Influenza Vaccine
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Vaccine Information Statement